



**4 FOOD PACKAGE/DRAFT ISSUANCE**

*Effective: 3/1/98*

**4.17 Low-Iron Formulas**

*Revised: 4/1/03*

**POLICY:** WIC-approved low-iron formulas may be issued in limited circumstances and when a project RD approves. If the prescribed formula is not available at a WIC-approved grocery store or pharmacy, a WIC-approved pharmacy is required to order it.

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. APPROVED LOW-IRON FORMULAS**

The WIC-approved low-iron formulas are listed on the Food Package Tailoring/Selection Charts, Low-Iron Formulas section (see attachment in Policy 4.10 Food Packages: General) and on the WIC Program Formulas and Medical Foods Table (attachment to Policy 4.14).

**B. DETERMINATION OF NEED**

Inquire as to why the parent/caregiver is requesting a low-iron formula.

1. Low-iron formula may be approved for:
  - a) Conditions where there is a risk for iron overload [Sickle Cell Anemia, Thalassemia (Major or Cooley's, minor, etc.), transfusions, Hemosiderosis, Vitamin E Hemolytic Anemia (in premature infants), or other unusual anemias such as aplastic, spherocytic, or iron transport deficiency.] Note: Iron is not always contraindicated for these conditions, but since WIC staff generally do not have all the details of the condition, it is best issue the formula prescribed. (For example, some thalassemias require blood transfusions; others are asymptomatic. Iron is not contraindicated in Sickle Cell Anemia unless the client is undergoing transfusions. Vitamin E hemolytic anemia can be exacerbated by a high iron intake, but most infant formulas now contain more vitamin E.)
  - b) Complex medical condition/serious illness/terminal illness requiring ongoing medical care (e.g., pending major surgery). Note: Iron is not contraindicated, but other health problems may be a higher priority at this time.
2. Low iron formula may *not* be approved for complaints of intolerance symptoms such as constipation, diarrhea, rashes, etc., except for cases that fall into B.1.b) above.



**C. APPROVALS and DOCUMENTATION**

RD approval and medical documentation are required as delineated in Policy 4.10.

Note: In an effort to avert requests for low iron formula for constipation, etc., these formulas are not listed on the Medical Referral Form or on the Noncontract Standard Formula request form.

**D. AVAILABILITY FOR PURCHASE**

1. Low-iron formulas are generally available at WIC-approved grocery stores.
2. If the prescribed formula is not available at a WIC-approved grocery store, the participant needs to purchase the formula at a WIC-approved pharmacy. If availability at a pharmacy is uncertain, either the participant or the Project needs to call the pharmacy before shopping to assure the formula is available. If the pharmacy does not stock the formula, they are required by their agreement with the WIC Program to order it for the participant.

**E. REASSESSMENT**

1. The continued need for low-iron formula must be reassessed at the Infant Update and subsequent certifications.
2. At a minimum, a new prescription is required when the intended length of use expires. Professional judgment should be used regarding whether or not to contact the physician's office for verification of the prescription or the intended length of use. Projects may require a new prescription at the Infant Update or subsequent certification if desired.

**F. MONITORING OF ISSUANCE RATES**

Local WIC Projects' issuance of low-iron formula food packages is monitored by the State WIC Office via the Participation by Food Package Report (WIC 807).